turmoil among the races and attempts to murder him. Gaston evades the plot and decrees that the city's Republican leadership and the "Negro Anarchist" editor must leave the city three days before the November election in order to end Negro rule and lawlessness. His terms are accepted and executed in a peaceful manner, but "a mob of a thousand armed Negroes concealed themselves in a hedgerow and fired on them from ambush, killing one man and wounding six. Gaston formed his men in line, returned fire with deadly effect, charged the mob, put them to flight, driving them into the woods."[46] In Dixon's portrayal, the white army represents law and order, whereas the black mob typifies the disorder of Fusion rule. The Red Shirts appear in Dixon's novel as "a spontaneous combustion of inflammable racial power that has been accumulating for a generation."[47] Dixon portrayed racial violence as a natural response to perceived political and social oppression which, according to southern collective memory, was unleashed by Northerners during Reconstruction and resurrected by the Republican-Populist Fusion government in the 1890s.

Dixon articulated a version of events similar to the popular narrative. Written to clarify Northern confusion about the postbellum South, Dixon idealized the riot, omitting the political coup and justifying the bloodshed as a response to black aggression. Retold in Dixon's nationalistic and imperialist language, the Wilmington Race Riot became a crucial event in the nation's history.[48]

The Wilmington Race Riot received little attention over the next century. Despite the absence of discussion, the riot was not forgotten. *The Leopard's Spots* reinterpreted the defeat of the Fusion government and the disfranchisement of African Americans as an essential part of sectional reunion and national progress. The Civil War, Radical Reconstruction, and Fusion politics were uncharacteristic periods in Southern history, and whites resorted to whatever means necessary to restore the traditional racial order. This restoration was integrated into the cultural landscape in North Carolina. Catherine W. Bishir noted the far-reaching cultural changes underway in Raleigh and Wilmington after the "Revolution of 1898." Architectural tastes and the commemoration movement emphasized continuity, harmony, and, perhaps most importantly, Anglo-Saxon authority. Newly built homes reflected the popularity of the "Colonial Revival" style that linked the Old and New South in the minds of their owners, "captur[ing] in modern terms the symbols of that glorious past." Confederate memorials marked the landscape around government buildings. Public ceremonies to dedicate these landmarks provided an articulation of the meanings intended by the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Colonial Dames of America. These developments reiterated the belief that the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Fusion politics were temporary disruptions in southern history, characterized by Anglo-Saxon supremacy. The violence that occurred in Wilmington in 1898 slipped into the background, but whites resurrected the memory of the bloodshed in order to quell dissent within Wilmington's African American community. For example, when North Carolina Governor Joseph Broughton attended the launching of the Liberty Ship *John Merrick* in Wilmington in 1943, he raised the

[46] Dixon, *The Leopard's Spots*, pg. 414-416.
[47] Dixon, *The Leopard's Spots*, pg. 419.
[48] Andrews, *Literary Career*, pg. 184-185; Gunning, *Race, Rape, and Lynching*, pg. 31; Wilson, *Whiteness*, pg. 121-122.